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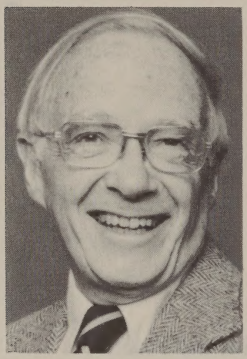

"Life is filled with suffering, but it is also filled with many wonders, like the blue sky, the sunshine, the eyes of a baby. To suffer is not enough. We must also be in touch with the wonders of life. They are within us and all around us, everywhere, any time."

Those are the opening words of *Being Peace*, by Thich Nhat Hanh, poet, Zen master, and chairman of the Buddhist peace delegation during the Vietnam war. Nominated by Dr. Martin Luther King for the Nobel Peace Prize, he was described by Thomas Merton as "more my brother than many who are nearer to me in race and nationality, because he and I see things in exactly the same way."

"If we are peaceful," Nhat Hanh says, "if we are happy, we can blossom like a flower, and everyone in our family, our entire society, will benefit from our peace." How can we be happy in the midst of all the unhappiness inside and around us? The answer is to be totally alive and aware in *this* moment. Not dwelling in the unchangeable past. Not worrying about the unknowable future. The only aspect of time that is real is *this* moment. And we can smile, and be happy, because we are alive and part of the miracle of being—right here, right now.

At a week-long workshop in New York City, given by Nhat Hanh, he told of the woman who asked him, "How can I force myself to smile when I am filled with sorrow?" He said to her that she must smile *to* her sorrow, because we are more than our sorrow. A human being, he said, is like a television set with millions of channels. If we turn the Buddha on, we *are* the Buddha. If we turn sorrow on, we *are* sorrow. If we turn a smile on, we really *are* the smile. We are free to choose the channel we want. "We have the seed of everything in us, and we have sovereignty over ourselves," he said. We demonstrate that fact every time we smile. "If we are not able to smile," Nhat Hanh said, "then the world will not have peace." To help us make smiling a part of our practice, Nhat Hanh taught us to say these lines to ourselves as we follow our breath in and out:

Breathing in, I calm body and mind
Breathing out, I smile with joy
Dwelling in the present,
This is the only moment.

Since attending Nhat Hanh's workshop, I have made a practice of trying to walk slowly and mindfully, with a smile of peace and joy on my lips. I smile with the pure joy of being.

Breathing in, I calm body and mind
Breathing out, I smile with joy
Dwelling in the present,
This is the only moment.

I try not to let my usual turbulence of "thoughts" and emotions, fears and fantasies, carry me away from my True Self and from the wonderful reality of here-and-now. And as I walk, smiling joyfully and indiscriminately on all who pass by, a miracle happens! They smile back! Hurrying along, tense and preoccupied, hardly aware of their surroundings, my smile penetrates the armor of their self-concern. They look startled. Confused. Then, their faces relax. Their eyes light up. They smile. Even the men! For a moment, at least, my smile has transformed them into the happy, peaceful people they really are. Try it yourself. At home. At your place of work. In the streets. Like a pebble dropped in a pool of water, your smile will radiate out to eternity. It's one of the most effective ways to work for peace I know about.

Breathing in, I calm body and mind
Breathing out, I smile with joy
Dwelling in the present,
This is the only moment.

Paul Walsh
President
Fellowship in Prayer, Inc.

God is not silent and we are not blind. In everyone's life there are moments when there is a lifting of the veil . . . , opening a sight of the eternal. Each of us has at least once experienced the momentous reality of God. Each of us has once caught a glimpse of the beauty, peace and power that flow through the souls of those devoted to God. But such experiences are rare. To some they are like shooting stars, passing and unremembered. In others they kindle a light that is never quenched. The remembrance of that experience and the loyalty to the response of that moment are the forces that sustain our faith.

Abraham Joshua Heschel

When man imprisons woman, he condemns himself to the life of a prison guard.

Anonymous

If we are to be creators, we must begin to think in terms of a whole new work ethic. The reward will not be in higher wages, another rung on the ladder, the acclaim of our peers, but in creative forces which flow within us and accomplish in our own lives the gracious work of transformation.

Elizabeth O'Connor

When humility delivers us from attachment to our own works and our own reputation, we discover that perfect joy is only possible when we have completely forgotten ourselves. And it is only when we pay no more attention to our own life and our own reputation and our own excellence that we are at least completely free to serve God in perfection for God's own sake alone.

Thomas Merton

The lovers of God have no religion but God alone.

Rumi

We are not better for other persons' praise nor worse for their blame.

William Blake

Vipassana Meditation

KEVIN O'NEIL

When we fail to get what we want or get what we don't want, we cause ourselves to suffer from all kinds of negativity. How can we stop the dynamic? This article offers a time-tested remedy dating from Gotama the Buddha.

Everyone seeks peace and harmony, because these are what we lack in our lives. From time to time we all experience agitation, irritation, disharmony and suffering. And when one suffers from agitation, one fails to keep this misery to oneself; instead, one keeps distributing it to others. The agitation permeates the atmosphere around the miserable person. Everyone else who comes into contact with him or her becomes irritated, and agitated. Certainly this is not the right way to live.

One ought to live at peace with oneself, and at peace with all others. After all, a human being is a social being. He/she has to live in a society, to live and deal with others. How to live peacefully? How to remain harmonious within ourselves, and to maintain peace and harmony around us, so that others also can live peacefully, harmoniously? Here is how.

One is agitated. Then, to come out of it, one has to know the basic reason for the agitation, the cause of the suffering. If one investigates the problems, it soon becomes clear that whenever one starts generating any negativity or defilement in the mind, one is bound to become agitated. A negativity in the mind, a mental defilement or impurity cannot co-exist with peace and harmony.

How does one start generating negativity? I become very unhappy when I find someone behaving in a way which I don't like, when I find something happening which I don't like. Unwanted things happen and I create tension within me. Wanted things do not happen, some obstacles come in the way, and again I create tension within myself. I start tying knots within myself. And throughout life, unwanted things keep on hap-

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pening, wanted things may or may not happen, and this process of reaction, of tying knots, Gordian knots, makes the entire mental and physical structure tense, full of negativity. Life becomes miserable.

Now one way to solve the problem is to arrange that nothing unwanted happens in my life, and that everything keeps on happening exactly as I desire. I must develop such power, or somebody else must have the power and must come to my aid when I request that nothing unwanted happen in my life, and that everything I want should keep on happening. But this is not possible. There is no one in the world whose desires are always fulfilled, in whose life everything happens according to his/her wishes, without anything unwished-for happening. Things keep on occurring that are contrary to our desires and wishes. Then in spite of these things which I don't like, how not to react blindly? How not to create tension? How to remain peaceful and harmonious?

In India as well as in other countries, wise persons of the past studied this problem—the problem of human suffering and they found a solution: if something unwanted happens and one starts to react by generating anger, fear, or any negativity, then as soon as possible one should divert one's attention to something else. Get up, take a glass of water, start drinking and your anger will not multiply, you'll be out of danger. Or start counting, one, two, three, four. Or start repeating a word, any word or phrase, perhaps the name of a deity or great person in whom you have faith, when you do this your mind will be diverted, and to some extent you'll be out of the negativity, out of anger.

This solution was helpful to many people. It will work for you. Practicing this, your mind feels free from agitation. But in fact, the solution works only at the conscious level. Actually, by diverting your attention, you push the negativity deep into your unconscious, and on that level you continue to generate and multiply these same defilements. At the surface level there is a layer of peace and harmony, but in the depths of your mind is a sleeping volcano of suppressed negativity, which sooner or later will explode in violent eruption.

Other explorers of inner truth went still further in their search and by experiencing the reality of the mind and matter within, they recognized that diverting one's attention is only running away from the problem. Escape is no solution; one must face the problem. Whenever a negativity arises in your mind, just observe it, face it. As soon as you start observing your mental defilements, then they begin to lose all strength. Slowly they wither away and are uprooted.

Paul M. Schrock

A good solution is to avoid both the extremes of suppression and of free license. Keeping the negativity in your unconscious will not eradicate it; and allowing it to manifest in your physical or vocal actions will only create more problems. But if you just observe, then the defilement passes away, and you have eradicated that negativity.

This sounds wonderful, but is it really? For an average person, is it easy to face one's defilements? When anger rises, it overpowers one so quickly that we don't even notice. Then, overpowered by anger, we commit certain actions which are harmful to ourselves and others. Later, when the anger has passed, we start crying or repenting, begging pardon from this or that God and think "Oh, I made a mistake, please excuse me." The next time, in a similar situation, we again react in the same way. All this repenting does not help at all.

The difficulty is that you are not aware when a defilement starts, so how can you respond effectively to them. Defilements begin deep within you at an unconscious level and by the time it reaches your conscious level, it has gained so much strength that you are overwhelmed.

Gotama Buddha discovered that whenever any defilement arises in the mind, simultaneously, two things start happening at the physical level. One is that the breath loses its normal rhythm. A person starts breathing hard whenever negativity comes into their mind. This is one reality that everyone can notice, though it may be very hard to do so. At the other more subtle level, some kind of biochemical reaction starts within the body (this is a sensation). Every defilement will generate a sensation of some kind, in one part of the body. An ordinary person cannot observe abstract defilements of the mind. But with proper training and practice, it is very easy to observe one's respiration and sensations, both of which are directly related to mental defilement and activity.

Your respiration and sensations help in two ways. First, they act as private guides, as soon as a defilement starts in your mind, your breath will lose its normal fluidity; it will start screaming to you "Look, something has gone wrong." You should accept this warning. Likewise your sensations will scream at you "Something is wrong." Having been warned, start observing your respiration and sensations to find out very quickly what defilement is passing through your mind.

This mental and physical phenomenon are two sides of one coin. On the one side is your respiration and sensation within your body. Any thought or emotion whether conscious or unconscious, any mental de-

filement, will manifest in your breath or as a sensation the moment it arises. By observing these defilements instead of running away from them, will enable you to face reality as it is. When you are able to do this you will find that your defilements have lost their strength over you. They can no longer overpower you as in the past. If you persist with this practice your defilements will eventually disappear altogether, and you will become peaceful and happy.

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The technique of self-observation will show you reality in its two aspects, outside and inside. Previously, while you looked with open eyes, you missed your inner truth. You always looked outside for the cause of your unhappiness or blamed others while trying to change what is outside you. Because of your ignorance of inner reality, you never understood that the cause of all suffering lies within as a result of one's own blind reactions.

Now I hope you see the other side of the coin, and are aware of what is happening inside you. Whatever sensation, learn to observe it, without losing your balance of mind. Stop reacting, stop multiplying your miseries.

The more you practice this technique, the more you will find yourself quickly coming out of your negativity. Gradually your mind will become free of defilements and pure. A pure mind is always full of love and compassion.

When you reach this stage, then the entire pattern of your life will start changing. It will be no longer possible for you to do anything vocally or physically which will disturb the peace and happiness of others. The balanced mind not only becomes peaceful but it helps others also become peaceful. The atmosphere surrounding such a person will become permeated with peace and harmony, and this will start affecting others too.

This is what the Buddha taught, it is also called an art of living. Buddha never taught any religion or ism. He never instructed his followers

to practice any rites or rituals, or blind empty formalities. Instead, he taught that one should just observe nature as it is, by observing one's reality inside.

Out of ignorance people keep reacting in a way which is harmful to themselves and others. When one has the wisdom to observe reality as it is, then one is no longer trapped in the habit of reaction. When you cease to react blindly, then you will be capable of real action that proceeds from a balanced mind, a mind that sees and understands the truth. Such actions can only be positive, creative, helpful to oneself and others.

One must know oneself not just at the intellectual level, the level of ideas and theories. Nor on a devotional or emotional level, simply accepting blindly what others have heard or read. Such knowledge is not enough. Rather, you must know reality as its actual level. Experience directly the reality of this mental-physical phenomenon.

This direct experience of your own reality, this technique of self-observation, is what is called Vipassana meditation. It means to look or see with open eyes. Vipassana means to observe things as they really are, not just as they seem to be. Apparent truth has to be penetrated, until one reaches the ultimate truth of the mental and physical structure. When you experience this truth, you will learn to stop reacting blindly, to stop creating your defilements. Then naturally your old defilements will gradually be eradicated and you will come out of all of your miseries and experience happiness.

There are three steps to this training. First you must abstain from any action, physical or vocal, which disturbs the peace and harmony of others. You cannot work to liberate yourself while at the same time continuing to perform deeds with your body and speech which only multiply your defilements. Therefore, you must have a code of morality as an essential step of your practice. You must make a promise not to kill, steal, commit sexual misconduct, lie or use intoxicants (alcohol, illegal drugs, tobacco). By abstaining from these actions, you allow your mind to quiet down sufficiently so that it can proceed with the task at hand.

The next step is to develop some mastery over your wild mind, by training it to remain fixed on a single object, "your breath." Try to keep your attention for as long as possible on your respiration This is not a breathing exercise, you are not to regulate your breath. Instead observe the natural respiration of your breath as it comes in and out. In this way you may further calm your mind, so that it is no longer overpowered by

Tom Dunham

violent negativisms. At the same time, you should be concentrating your mind, making it sharp and penetrating, capable of beginning the work of insight.

These first two steps are very necessary and beneficial. But they lead to self-repression, unless you take the third step; purifying your mind of the defilements, by developing insight into your own nature. This is Vipassana, experiencing one's own reality, by the systematic and dispassionate

observation of the ever-changing sensations within oneself. This is the culmination of self-purification by self-observation.

This can be practiced by everyone. Human problems are not sectarian; therefore remedies cannot be sectarian, they must be universal. This is one technique that can help.

By observing reality and truth inside equals knowing from a very basic level. From this level one tries to penetrate to the ultimate truth of mind and matter. Then one transcends to experience a truth which is beyond the mind and matter, beyond time and space, beyond the conditioned field of relativity, the truth of total liberation from all defilements, all impurities, all suffering. Whatever name one gives this ultimate method is irrelevant; it is the final goal that counts.

May all of you experience this ultimate truth. May all people who are suffering from negativisms, defilements, impurities, come out of their defilements, and misery. May they enjoy real happiness, peace and harmony.

Centering

BASIL PENNINGTON, O.C.S.O.

Practice twenty minutes of Centering Prayer twice a day for thirty days, the author advises, and you will find the inner peace that leads to peace in relationships and a more tranquil world.

The way to a deep inner peace is to be in touch with your inner reality. Too often our prayer is one of words, thoughts, images, concepts—all things produced by our mind. No wonder we often find prayer tiresome, hardly refreshing. Yet Jesus has said: "Come to me all you who labor and are heavily burdened, and I will refresh you." Prayer should be refreshing. We need to learn to listen, to listen with love, to listen in love.

Sacred Reading—or Listening

The place we can most easily hear the Lord is in the Scriptures.

The Bible should be among our most precious possessions. It should never be simply left lying about or shelved among the other books. Rather it should be enthroned in our homes and offices as a Real Presence of the Lord in our midst.

Each day we want to take some time to listen to the Lord speaking to us in his inspired Word. We take our Bible with great reverence, aware of God's Presence. We ask the Holy Spirit who inspired the writer and who lives in us to make the Word come alive now in us. Then we listen for our allotted time. We respond as we are moved. If the Lord speaks powerfully to us, we simply abide in this word and presence. At the end of our time, we thank the Lord and we take away from our encounter a thought or word to carry with us through the day.

Basil Pennington, known internationally for his books on Christian spirituality, is a leader in the contemporary rediscovery of Centering Prayer. He is a Cistercian monk of the Strict Observance, the Order to which Thomas Merton belonged. You may order his books from St. Joseph's Abbey, Spencer, MA 10562. St. Joseph's is a particularly beautiful monastery, well worth a visit for silence and prayer. Retreats for men are offerred on an ongoing basis.

Tom Dunham

A Deeper Listening

At the last supper, Jesus told his disciples—all of us: I no longer call you servants, but *friends*, because I make known to you all that God has made known to me—all the secrets of my heart. We have been made for a deep intimate friendship with the Lord. Our hearts long for it. As a great sinner who became a great saint once cried: "Our hearts are made for you, O Lord, and they will not rest until they rest in you!" We are not content with just listening to the Lord's words, no matter how wonderful they are. We want a deeper, more experiential union. It is like any true friendship: as it grows it needs to go beyond words and doing things together and for each other. The image God has frequently used is that of the marital embrace, that total being to each other. We need those times of prayer when we listen not just with our ears, our eyes, our minds but more with our hearts, with our whole being.

This kind of prayer has sometimes been called contemplative prayer or prayer of the heart. It is a prayer of being. The tradition has passed down to us a simple way of entering into this kind of prayer. This traditional way is called today, Centering Prayer.

Centering Prayer

Centering Prayer is a very simple way of prayer which can be used by anyone who wants to be with God, to experience divine love and presence. It is a prayer of longing that leads into a prayer of Presence.

First of all, we settle ourselves down quietly. Most of us pray best sitting down, but take any posture that works well for you. It is best if the back is fairly straight and well supported. If we gently close our eyes, we immediately begin to quiet down, for we use a lot of our psychic energy in seeing.

Once we are settled, we turn our attention to God present within us. We know God is there by faith. In love we turn ourselves over to God. For these minutes we are all God's. This prayer is a pure gift, a gift of self in love.

In order to be able to abide quietly and attentively with our Beloved, we use a love word, a prayer word—a simple word that expresses our being to the Lord in love. It might well be our favorite name for God: Lord, Jesus, Father, Love . . . whatever is meaningful for us. We just let that word be there, to keep us attentive. It is not an effortful ejaculation or a constantly repeated *mantra*, but rather a sigh of love, a murmur of love, a "being to."

Whenever, during the time of our prayer, we become aware of anything else, we simply use our love word to return to the Lord. Some days we will have to use the word a great deal: there may be a lot of commotion around us or in use. No matter. Each time we use it, each time we return to him, it is a perfect gift of self to God in love. Other days we may not need to use our word much at all. Fine! It really makes no difference. Simply, these minutes are all God's to do with as he likes. We don't seek anything for ourselves. It is pure gift. It is not during the prayer we will be aware of things. All our attention is on God. It is outside the time of prayer that we will begin to see the difference, as the fruits of the Spirit—love, peace, joy, kindness . . .—begin to flourish in our lives.

At the end of our twenty minutes, we do not want to jump right back into activity. We have gone very deep, even if we don't seem to sense it. So we want to end our prayer very gently. I suggest praying interiorly, very slowly, the Our Father. Let each phrase come forth with all its meaning. In this the Lord will teach us much. And the deep peace of our contemplative prayer will flow into our active lives.

Paul M. Schrock

It is a prayer of experience, so we can only know it by experience. We always urge people learning this prayer to make a commitment to themselves to practice the prayer faithfully, twice a day, for thirty days. Then, perhaps with a close friend, for some one else can usually see better than we, look and see what has been the fruit of the prayer in our lives. If the way we were praying before was producing better fruit, don't hesitate to return to it. But if this simple prayer of listening, attentive love has been good for us, then by all means continue in it. The important thing is that we do pray regularly and allow God to be to us the source of love, life, peace and happiness.

A Summary

To sum up these two simple traditional methods of being to the Lord as the Source of our peace:

Sacred Reading

It is well to keep the Sacred Scriptures enthroned in our home in a place of honor as a real Presence of the Word in our midst.

1. Take the Sacred Text with reverence and call upon the Holy Spirit.
2. For five minutes (or longer, if you are so drawn) listen to the Lord speaking to you through the Text, and respond.
3. At the end of the time, choose a word or phrase (perhaps one will have been 'given' to you), to take with you, and thank the Lord for being with you and speaking to you.

Centering Prayer

Sit relaxed and quiet.

1. Be in faith and love to God who dwells in the center of your being.
2. Take up a love word and let it be gently present, supporting your being to God in faith-filled love.
3. Whenever you become aware of anything else, simply, gently return to the Lord with the use of your prayer word.

Let the Our Father (or some other prayer) pray itself. John the Baptist's father, Zechariah, tells us that Jesus came "to guide our feet into the way of peace." We have but to listen to the Lord—listen to God in his Word, listen to God in our hearts—and we shall find the peace we so long for, the peace that this world of ours so desperately needs. We will find that that peace already dwells in us at the center of our being, for there dwells the Source of all peace.

Suggested Reading

By Fr. M. Basil Pennington
Daily We Touch Him
Centering Prayer
Centered Living
A Centered Life. A Practical Course on Centering Prayer

8 cassettes

How To Center Your Life. VHS or Beta II
Finding Grace at the Center, by Fr. Thomas Keating
Open Mind, Open Heart, by Fr. Keating

The Struggle for Faith

CELESTE O. COX

This writer describes her own experience of the conflict between faith and disbelief. The problem may be, she writes, that we have a lifestyle, not a purpose.

"You have been deprived of the faith. All of us have. It is part of the times."

So says Father Simon Smith, a paranoid but strangely prophetic character in Walker Percy's novel *The Thanatos Syndrome*. Father Smith is speaking to Dr. Tom More, the protagonist in Percy's story who has told the priest he is no longer sure what he believes.

Those of us struggling with our faith may be drawn to accept what Father Smith is saying: that an evil someone or something—a Great Deprivers, as Percy's priest puts it—has spoiled our capacity for belief. If what he says is true, then we would know with certainty that we are simply incapable of trusting completely in anything or anyone but ourselves. But is Father Smith correct in his observation of "the times?" Is our faithlessness an inevitable effect of some external force working to deprive us of that "abiding faith of old?" From my personal experience in the movement both toward and away from faith, I would have to disagree.

Heal yourself, say the wellness experts. *Be born again*, say the TV evangelists. *Serve the poor*, say the humanists. *Serve me*, says mammon. I listen to the formulas, for awhile. Sometimes what I find in them is helpful, but so many of the claims are false. Time and again, the answers of the world leave me without fulfillment, without wonder, without truth.

Celeste O. Cox is a freelance writer and editor specializing in health care publications. She has written extensively on the mission of the Franciscan Sisters of Allegany at St. Mary's Hospital, West Palm Beach, Florida, and has won numerous national awards for excellence in journalism.

Cliff Moore

In my struggle, I've managed to accept that "the faith" requires rigorous self-examination and an absolute reverence for truth that, realized and acted on, may point to the One Truth, to God. I know about the Christian concept of dying to self that one might come to Life, and I recognize the importance of stillness and prayer in the spiritual life. Does this awareness or even the practice of a Rule of Life truly alter my course? Not always. Not consistently. So often I choose to follow my natural tendencies toward *living* rather than *dying* to self. I put my trust in the here and now, in claims of "real," finite results. I believe in what I want to believe and much of what the world tells me I should believe. And that is to act, to do, to follow a formula: *Heal yourself*, say the wellness experts. *Be born again*, say the TV evangelists. *Serve the poor*, say the humanists. *Serve me*, says mammon.

I listen to the formulas, for a while. Sometimes what I find in them is helpful, but so many of the claims are false. Time and again, the answers of the world leave me without fulfillment, without wonder, without truth.

Do you know what the problem is? my friend asks, preparing to tell me. *We have a lifestyle, not a purpose*. Perhaps he is right. Perhaps we have styled our lives, molded them according to one formula, then another and another until our true identity is hardly recognizable, even to ourselves. That would explain why the symbols we revere, even the "good" ones—career achievements, family and church life—seem, confoundingly, to point only to life, here, and not to Life, beyond.

Is it possible, Father Smith, that we insist on creating truth as we would have it, rather than discovering Truth that, mysteriously, is? In my most broken, honest moments, I know this to be so. I know that I am missing a particular clarity of vision, a way of seeing the infinite in the ordinary, seeing God in the people I love and hate—and yes, seeing God in myself as well. In these moments I know that I am starved for Mystery and that I have *deprived myself* of "the faith."

Common Men at Prayer

DAN WAKEFIELD

The first time I ever heard a man who wasn't a minister, priest or rabbi pray out loud, I felt so embarrassed and nervous I literally hid under the covers. I was attending a high-school journalism convention, and my roommate, a friendly rival sports columnist on my paper, The Shortridge (Indianapolis) Daily Echo, asked if I would like to join him in prayer.

We had each turned in for the night, and I was glad he had switched off the light before issuing his invitation and wouldn't see my panicked reaction. After I mumbled "No thanks," I pulled the pillow over my head and lay there in frozen anxiety as I heard him say, in a clear, unaffected speaking voice, the words of the Lord's Prayer, and go on to express his love and concern for his family and friends, asking God's blessing of them. There was nothing bizarre or histrionic about my friend's prayer, yet it both awed and unnerved me, leaving an impression that has lasted 40 years.

I still prayed sometimes in high school, though I wouldn't have wanted the other guys to know it. Saying prayers aloud seemed to belong to childhood ("Now I lay me down to sleep") and was the opposite of what we growing boys were trying to prove ourselves to be at age 16, which made my friend's spoken prayer seem all the more threatening. I even squealed on him, reporting his prayer as a joke to the other guys, thus showing me to be "regular" in contrast. What struck me then as weirdness I interpreted in later years as integrity when that high-school cohort, Dick Lugar, became a United States Senator from Indiana. Of course I felt hypocritical for making fun of Lugar's prayer in high school while I continued to pray in secrecy and silence myself. Though I assumed most men I knew then believed in God, even the star athletes and class officers, there seemed something weak-kneed or "chicken" about prayer, perhaps because we associated it with asking for help. The main models we had of men praying (except for members of the clergy, who

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were only doing their job, and therefore acceptable) were the World War II heroes of the movies we grew up on.

Faced with the bayonet at the throat or a descending bomb while serving one's country, it was neither unmanly nor un-American to ask for help from a Higher Power. But once out of the foxholes (where popular lore told us "there are no atheists"), men returned home and changed from khaki into blue serge or gray flannel; they were supposed to "stand on their own two feet" and refrain from bowing their head, except once a week at sanctioned services.

After a fairly typical religious deconversion in college (Columbia '55), prayer was not an issue for most of my adult life, until I started going back to church again seven years ago. The satisfaction of praying with a congregation on Sunday mornings carried over into the week as a private practice, and prayer got to be a daily habit. I realized recently, though, that in talking to others (especially men) I usually refer to the 20-minute period I devote to prayer each day as "meditation," which sounds more practical, like a kind of stress-reduction technique.

"Do you pray?" a man asked me at lunch last summer in the executive dining room of his company. He had prefaced the question by saying, "I want to ask you about something," and warned a colleague of his at the table with us: "Now don't you laugh at me!" I answered simply, "Yes" to the question.

My interrogator followed up by asking, "When you pray, do you ever feel you are in touch with something beyond yourself?" I felt like a witness facing Perry Mason, and I wanted to answer as accurately as possible. "Sometimes I do, and sometimes I don't," I said.

The man eased back in his chair and said he hadn't experienced that, though he'd tried to pray. We talked about it a little more, but he had satisfied his curiosity. I was struck by his sincerity, and the difficulty there seemed to be in raising the subject, an uneasiness I think common to most of us American men.

The women in a prayer group I belong to (it meets for an hour after work every Monday evening) told me they thought men had a harder time with prayer than they did, attributing the difficulty to a quality that prayer requires that they felt most men don't possess or cultivate much: Humility. This explanation that seemed obvious to her had never occurred to me; my own humility-consciousness was raised on the spot.

Now that I'm known to be a member of a church—and even a prayer

Paul M. Schrock

group—I'm called on sometimes to say a prayer to open a meeting, or as grace before a meal. I still feel awkward doing it, with a sense of what seems like the old high-school embarrassment. Worrying about the varying beliefs and lack of beliefs of one assorted group that gathered not long ago for dinner, I couldn't think of any appropriate grace, and as the tension of waiting in silence mounted, and my homemade chili grew cold, I blurted out: "In the words of Tiny Tim, 'God bless us every one.' "

The best prayer I've heard from a layman was offered recently at the men's Immigration and Naturalization Service Detention Center in Boston. A dozen men from throughout the world (Sierra Leone, the Dominican Republic, Pakistan were among the nations represented), who are temporarily trapped here in legal limbo, sat around a table in the bleakest of rooms. The Rev. Constance Hammond, an Episcopal minister who has made this her parish, called on a handsome young fellow from Ghana to offer a prayer before beginning a session of Bible study. Without any bumbling or hesitation, he boomed out in a joyous voice:

"Dear God, we thank you for giving us this wonderful chance to study your Word—help us to understand, and give us much to put under our hat!" I smiled, and responded without my usual self-consciousness: "Amen."

"But What About Love?"

DAVID EASTMAN

Send the story of your own spiritual experience, typed and double spaced, to the Editor, Fellowship In Prayer, 291 Witherspoon Street, Princeton, New Jersey 08542.

The great way is not difficult
for those who hold no preferences.
When love and hate are both absent
everything becomes clear and undisguised.
Make the slightest distinction, however
and heaven and earth are set infinitely apart.

So begins the Hsin Hsin Ming ("Verses on the Faith Mind") by Sengstan, the third Zen patriarch. I have given copies of this terse yet eloquent scripture, which is a mere 7 pages in length, to everyone from my children's babysitters to the local Episcopal bishop, from professors to truck drivers, from my ex-wife to my spiritual director.

Like the recipients themselves responses to the small pamphlet have varied. The central question everyone voices, though, is "But what about love? Do we really want love to be absent? And if Sengstan doesn't believe in the goodness and power of love isn't his teaching in direct conflict with the gospel of Jesus?"

A Zen Master might respond to the last question with a simple "No." If he was really in an expansive or expressive mood he might advise "Go deeper."

Not being a Zen master and not being privy to the wisdom of such a master, I've attempted to explore and understand the question of love in the same way I grapple with any problem that perplexes me—by exploring my thoughts, feelings, and intuitions through introspection, discussion, and meditation.

David Eastman teaches at Indiana University and facilitates meditation groups at Notre Dame University.

The conclusions I have come to do not, I believe, contradict my hypothetical Zen master's cryptic "No" and "Go deeper." The conclusions are perhaps merely a pacifier for my mind. Like an infant's pacifier they are without true nourishment, and yet they provide a quieting, a sense of peace which may in itself be the first stage to going deeper.

When I began to think about writing this piece, I was planning to share with you some of the trains of thought I've used in attempting to understand the Hsin Hsin Ming in relation to the teachings of Jesus. Even a few minutes ago when I wrote the first paragraphs I was planning to talk with you philosophically, the way I usually talk with my friends and other unsuspecting recipients of Sengstan's verses when they question me about love being absent.

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"This is a highly inspired, ethical publication. Love streams out of it!" "Part of my devotional reading every day." "I find your articles about different beliefs very interesting and informative. They make for better understanding among all persons." "It strengthens my faith in prayer." "The idea of interreligious understanding and cooperation is very dear to me. This is the way to peace." "I love it! It is well written by beautiful, loving people! It is delightful, inspirational, and uplifting. Thank you!" "You give me everything I need: fellowship, insight, hope, and prayer."

These responses to the question, "Why do you read *Fellowship In Prayer*?" in our Readership Survey are typical of the vast number of answers received. Thank you! Clearly readers find that "Fellowship In Prayer" is a rich source of spiritual nourishment in a world that more than ever needs the power of prayer and meditation.

from a letter by Paul Walsh, F.I.P. President

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But now I don't think I will. The words will lay flat on the page, not springing to life as they do from lip to ear. And, besides, while I may find my own intellectual pacifiers comforting, why risk insulting you by asking you to suck on the same hollow thoughts?

Instead, I'll tell you about an experience that I had not so long ago, an experience at a time when Sengstan and the Hsin Hsin Ming were the furthest things from my mind.

Recently my ex-wife decided to abruptly pull up roots here in Indiana and move to Oklahoma, taking our two small daughters with her. Though we've been divorced for almost two years, I'd continued to see my daughters on a daily basis. When the realization that they soon would be 1,000 miles away first hit me I was devastated. I drove around in my car ranting, raving, crying, and scheming up wild, and in retrospect quite humorous, ways to end the terrible pain I was feeling. I came home and paced the living room floor all the while screaming, crying and cussing. I finally began praying a wild, flailing prayer, a testimony of how much I love my daughters, of how much I love God. I begged, pleaded, bargained, adored, anything so that they would not be taken away from me.

The frozen winter night sparkled like the dew at sunrise on a brilliant May morning. There was a balance, a harmony, and dare I say everything was "clear and undisguised"?

Then the emotional pendulum swung to hate just as surely as the pendulum of a grandfather clock will swing right just before hitting the left side of the clock case. Not only did I hate my ex-wife, I hated myself, and I hated God. I cursed us all in the most vitriolic terms I could find for our unconscious conspiracy in bringing about this deplorable situation. I beat pillows, kicked furniture, and had an all consuming temper tantrum worthy of the brattiest two-year-old.

Then, just as abruptly as my emotions had swung from love to hate, the hate too stopped. And what was left in its place? A peace, a very deep peace not cognitively constructed but holistic, a peace of body, mind and spirit. Yes, love and hate were both absent, and the frozen winter night sparkled like the dew at sunrise on a brilliant May morning. There was a balance, a harmony, and dare I say everything was "clear and undisguised?"

Now, you may say that if you act crazy enough for long enough sooner

or later you're going to calm down and feel a damn sight better. We all know that's true. But I think, and I feel, that there's really something more here, something that though hard to put into words is essential to express. The something more might be called grace, or "the peace that passeth all understanding," or even Love with a capital "L" to distinguish it from the small "l" love which most times might better be termed "attachment." It's the wisdom of paradox, of letting it all go and getting back more than you ever imagined, of being in this world but not of it, of doing your damndest without giving a damn—the crazy wisdom of Zorba the Buddha.

Now Sengstan and Jesus are buddies in my book, soul brothers not just in my mind but in my body, even in my soul. Experience, and most ironically an experience that started out very negatively, has given me a much deeper understanding of the teachings of both Jesus and Sengstan than thoughts and their attendant words can ever convey.

But what about love? That's still the question, the eternal question, Jesus' favorite koan. It's a question without a rational answer, an enigma that cannot be solved by the mind.

I could say, as I hinted a couple of paragraphs ago, that perhaps what we call love is not really love at all. I could say that only when we get rid of our concepts about love and our petty emotional reactions can we know true Love. I could say that Sengstan in true Zen master form is trying to awaken us, shock us into realizing that we really need to free ourselves from duality to know Reality. And I could even go a step further and say indeed Reality and Love are one and the same.

But then I remember one full moon night when I left the home of my spiritual director and flipped on the car radio to a country western station. I don't remember much about the song that rose softly from the dashboard, but the tag line in the chorus was "you don't know love." My first hint for solving the koan of love came from the Grand Old Opry! And Johnny Paycheck, or Ferlin Husky, or whoever that country prophet was was right. I don't know love, you don't know love, we can't know love with our minds, nor even with our over-reactive emotions.

Fritz Perls, the granddaddy of gestalt therapy, used to say "the quickest way beyond is through." We may be pushed through to this state of grace where love and hate have both been jettisoned from our minds by the events of our lives, and we may open to it through meditation. When we experience this "peace that passeth all understanding," where "love

Brooks Walsh

and hate are both absent," have we solved the koan of love? I don't know. Perhaps dissolved is a better word, dissolved at least temporarily. But in such a state being seems much more important than solving, and in just being present without judgments, without attachments, without concepts heaven and earth are apart no longer.

What My Faith and Practice Mean to Me

EVA C. BEHRENS

Here is one of the fine essays written this year for our annual awards program, named for Fellowship In Prayer's Co-founder Kathryn G. Brown.

My "spiritual journey" is expressed through prayer. In the past, I called my prayers "poetry" and my experience "psychological." Today, I perceive my poems as prayers and my experience in writing them as religious. My poetry/prayers speak of the energy and intensity of human relationships. I call the spark in relationships (human or other), the Divine Spark. I call the energy that fills me at the height of my passion in life and at my deepest depression, Divine Energy. It is at once within me and around me. Others share in it; we humans exchange it, and in an earlier time, we actively shared this Energy with our natural surroundings. Sadly, in this age, most people have ceased to search for relation, Divine Energy and Knowledge in nature. But as inhabitants of this Earth, we should reach beyond the boundaries of our humanly constructed society and experience Spark and Knowledge contained in all being.

Because our society regards the natural cosmos as alien to the human spirit, my deepest experience has occurred in human centered relation. Yet I feel a need to discover the movement of Divine Energy within our neglected and exploited environment. To have relation to nature is to understand its relevance to my physical and spiritual survival. Therefore I must recognize nature as sacred, placed on earth as much a participant in Divine Knowledge as human beings. Through the Divine Energies in nature, I can grow, if I present myself as nature's respectful pupil, not as an abusive master. Beyond relation to nature is relation to the energies of the universe. Relation with such a vast reality I currently cannot con-

Eva Behrens is a junior at Bryn Mawr College majoring in Religion and concentrating in Women's Studies and Intercultural Studies. With a fellow student she coordinates her college's Women's Center and is active in the feminist political action group. After graduation she hopes to work in human services and to find practical expression for her spirituality in helping others.

ceptualize, unless it occurs through my smaller encounters with individual Presence. The Energies, the Changes, the Harmonies, and the discords that move through these three sets of relations is the Divine Presence. I open myself to these dimensions of Divine Presence through my poems/prayers.

This is the first year I have called myself religious and it is the first year that I have prayed. Through prayer I can focus myself in my religious rituals; I can open myself to the Divine within and outside of me. Through prayer I can encounter the Divine that is present in all my other relationships. Its energy infuses me and reorients my world.

In my past experience, rereading my poems/prayers aloud has been to acknowledge the Divine Presence in my life and to open myself to greater participation in the Divine. If I would read my poetry to others, I would offer it as a source of Divine Inspiration and Teaching as reflected in my life. I learn from the Inspiration of others by reading their books, their poetry, and by listening to their thoughts. Because the Divine does not enter the world in one way, one creed, one dynamic moment, I must

strive to remain open to diverse Experience and Inspiration. The Divine is continually present before us, in us, around us, and beyond the worlds comprehensible to us. At once it unites us in our simple state of existence and it separates us through the energy of our individuality and personal Experience.

Prayer is a way to prepare
to gain perspective on your Path
Through Prayer you can walk your Path
without egotism without confusion

You set yourself back in perspective
with the Spiritual Force
You place yourself in relation
to the Spiritual Force

Perhaps you may touch the Force
It may envelop you
In prayer, I Journey
from this world and its consciousness
to another consciousness
other values

In Prayer is Power
of two essences mingling—
your small light
and the greater One
fusing for a brief instant
on the Path.

To Share

O God
You answer
before I speak
and hear me
before I call

Yet
this prayer is
our meeting place
the gracious gift
is mine, is all.

By William J. Schmidt

My deepest center
radiant sea
calm, infinite
beyond the flesh and blood of me
God-filled ocean
center me.

Central Spirit
depth to Depth
I would be free
conscious, in your mind to see,
Heaven and depths
eternally.

Please send your favorite prayer or one you have written yourself (typed and double spaced), to The Editor, Fellowship In Prayer, 291 Witherspoon Street, Princeton, New Jersey 08542.

Core of goodness
shoreless truth
hold in one
the cosmos and humanity
all in glory
Trinity.

By Charles M. Campbell

The Seven Practices of Reconciliation

THICH NHAT HANH

A Buddhist monk describes his monastery's formula for healing relationships in the hope that families and social groups will imitate this seven-fold process.

The 7 practices of reconciliation have been used for 2,500 years in Buddhist monasteries to settle disputes within the circles of monks. But we might use them in our family or in our society as well. The first method is "Face-to-Face Evidence." In a convocation of the whole sangha, everyone sits like this, very mindful, breathing, smiling, with the willingness to help and not with the willingness to fight. This is basic. The two conflicting monks are present, and they know, they are aware of the fact that everyone in the community expects them to make peace. So before saying anything, that atmosphere should be expected, should be real already. And the people refrain from listening to stories outside of the assembly, spreading news about this monk or other monks, commenting on the behavior of this monk or the other monks, that should be forbidden. Everything should be said in the community. Face-to-face evidence.

So the two monks are sitting facing each other, like this, breathing, and—how hard—smiling. And the members of the community will not accept any talking, and comment outside of the assembly. That would not help. Everything should be said in public, in community. Anything this monk wants to say, he says publicly and to the other monk.

The second method is "Remembrance." Both sides try to remember what happened during the whole history of the conflict, to recall every detail of the conflict, every detail of the life having to do with the conflict. And the whole assembly just sits very patiently and listens. Both monks are encouraged to do this.

"I remember that that day it was rainy, and I went to the kitchen and you were there . . . ," telling as much as you can recall. This is quite important, because the monks are trying to mend the things in the past. Because the principle of *sangha* life is to be aware of what is going on

Excerpted with permission from a lecture given by Thich Nhat Hanh at Green Gulch Farm.

every day. And if you are not aware of what is going on, one day things will break apart, explode, and it will be too late to take care of it, to deal with it. So if we are in assembly and there are two monks confronting each other like this, that means already the conflict has exploded into the open. So to sit there and try to recall the details in the past is not the best thing to do, but it's the only thing to do now, as far as the past is concerned.

A man and a woman who get married and live a neglectful life, not knowing what is really going on in their subconsciousness, their feelings, their perceptions—that is, a couple just married and not practicing meditation—is a dangerous situation. Sometimes things are going on beneath the surface which will eventually explode, but by then it is too late to deal with, so the only recourse is divorce or fighting or even killing each other. To meditate is to be aware of what is going on in yourself, your feelings, your body, your perceptions, your family. This is very important to any kind of life. So the second technique is to recall, and the more details which the community has, the easier it is to help.

The third principle is "Non-stubbornness." It means everyone in the community is expecting the two monks not to be stubborn, to try their best for reconciliation. The outcome is not important. The fact that each monk is doing his best in order to show his willingness for reconciliation and understanding, that's more important. So when you do your best, trying to be your best in understanding and accepting, you don't have to worry about the outcome. You do your best, and that's very important. Because everyone has high expectations for the two monks, they know they must act well or they will not be recognized as brothers.

The fourth technique is very interesting—"Covering the mud with straw." You know when you walk in Green Gulch Farm after a rainy day, there is a lot of mud. You cannot go to the ocean. I tried that, I think if I had straw to spread on the mud, I would be able to go.

One high, respectable, understanding monk is appointed to sponsor one side of the conflict, and on the other side, another respectable monk is asked to sponsor the other monk. And then the whole assembly listens to these two senior monks. They will say things in order to de-escalate the feeling in the concerned people. And you know that in a Buddhist *sangha*, at least in mine, people respect, have great respect for the high monks. We call them ancestral teachers. And they don't say very much, but anything they say is taken very seriously by the rest of the community. And they say something concerning this monk, and then what he

Paul M. Schrock

says will cause the other monk to understand more and to de-escalate his feeling, his anger or his resistance. And then the other high monk also says things to protect this monk, but saying it in a way that the other monk feels better. And by doing so, by practicing so, they dissipate more and more the hard feeling in the hearts of the two monks and cause them to accept a verdict proposed by the community. So we call it putting straw on mud. The mud is the dispute. The straw is the loving kindness of the *Dharma*.

The next is the "Voluntary Confession." Voluntary confession means that you try to tell your own shortcomings, not to let others say it. You have to say it first. If the others say it, you feel different. And if you say it, it's wonderful. So first you try to say your minor weakness. Maybe you have a big weakness, first you try to hide it, and you only tell other people of a minor fault you committed. You know there is an art in all that. And as you make a confession, "Oh, I'm sorry, on that day I was not very mindful. I said such and such a thing. That's horrible. I'm sorry." Even [though] that is a very minor confession, it helps the other [person] feel better. And then he is encouraged to confess something of the same kind. (I'm thinking of the Soviet Union and the United States of America trying to de-escalate slowly the small things.) That atmosphere is very encouraging, and everyone is expecting, supportive, so that the de-escalation will be realized throughout the meeting. And the Buddha nature in each monk has the opportunity to come out. And the pressure on each monk from the anger or resentment will lighten, and the capacity of understanding and mutual acceptance will be born. And then the old monks also say that, "Well, you are part of the community. The well-being of the community is above all, is the most important thing. Therefore don't think only of your own feeling. Think of the well-being of the community." And then each monk will be ready to make a sacrifice, and get ready to accept the kind of verdict or decision made by the community.

The next technique is "Decision made by consensus." It is agreed in advance that the two monks will accept whatever verdict is pronounced by the whole assembly. Otherwise, if they don't accept the decision made by the community, they will have to go and live elsewhere. This is a real democracy. Therefore, after exploring every detail of the conflict, after realizing the maximum of reconciliation, a committee will present a verdict. Asking three times, the head of the community would read the de-

Tom Dunham

cision and say, "After meditation, after exploration, after discussion, after all efforts have been made, it is suggested that this monk will do so and so, that monk will do so and so, this should be repaired in this way, that should be repaired in that way. Would the assembly of monks accept this verdict?" First asking. And then the community remains silent. That means, "Okay." And then he repeats exactly the same thing with the same words, "Would the noble assembly accept this verdict?" And then silence. And the third time, "Would the noble assembly accept this verdict?" And then, a third time of silence. Then he pronounces, "The noble community of monks (or nuns) has accepted the verdict. So, please, both sides carry out the decision." And then it's the end of the session. And there can be many sessions succeeding one another in order to solve one case. If one of the two monks revolts against the verdict, his voice is of no value, because he has already agreed that he would obey any kind of verdict made by the assembly.

So these seven methods of settling disputes have been adopted by Buddhist monks and nuns in India, in China, in Vietnam, in Japan, in Korea, and in many other countries for more than 2,500 years. And I think you can learn, we can learn, something about this in order to apply it in our social life.

All Things are New

DANIEL G. CURRY

Here a man facing a 29-year prison sentence finds God and the radical personal renewal that can create hope in even dark, depressing surroundings. Send the story of your own transforming experience (typed and double spaced), to The Editor, Fellowship In Prayer, 291 Witherspoon Street, Princeton, New Jersey 08542. Please include a 50-word biography.

> "Behold I tell you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed—In the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed." (*I Corinthians 15:51-52.*)

Having spent nine years in Texas prisons I've done much thinking about time. I've also been reading the King James Bible, in which I've discovered what "doing time" is all about. We're all doing time; how we relate to the passage of time is how we change, move, and evaluate procedures through life. When we are close to God, doing time becomes the free and easy means by which reality is created.

If we view time in historical terms, we live in the past, and we'll tend to use precedent to justify our inflexibility and stubbornness. The world is full of historians, and so the world is full of stubborn people who will use the past as an excuse to corrupt the future. For instance, I was convicted of robbery six years ago, and given a twenty-nine year sentence. Each day since then I've been held in prison, not because each day I commit the same crime, but because my keepers judge me according to my past. It is in trying to overcome my past that I've studied the Bible and written this essay.

> "But now we have been delivered from the law, having died to what we were held by, so that we should serve in the newness of the spirit and not in the oldness of the letter." (*Romans 7:6.*)

As a born-again Christian I have learned that all things are constantly made new in the passage of time. The Bible is chock-full of this message.

Consider the New Testament; the Gospel, which means the good news; the new birth; new life; new commandment; new hope; new church; new earth and new heaven, all found in the new testament. The resurrection of Jesus Christ is a fact for all who believe. We are all resurrected who believe it is possible. Such resurrection occurs with me each and every new moment in time, as my old experiences fall away, or die, and new experiences come into life. I am "born again" every second in time.

> "Agree with your adversary quickly, while you are on the way with him or her, lest your adversary deliver you to the judge, the judge hands you over to the officer, and you be thrown into prison." (*Matthew 5:25.*)

The Biblical last judgment has for me already occurred, from the moment I realized there's no point in judging past deeds. What I judge of the past is not really the past—It is the newly unfolding presence of regenerated life. What I think of yesterday is not really yesterday. Yesterday is always brought up-to-date with what I'm currently doing. As soon as I try to make a judgment and say, "This is good or bad," it immediately slips into the past, gone forever, and is replaced with perfectly new, unprecedented realities. How foolish I would then be, hoping to "pin down" the moment, as if I could stop the passage of time. We are proceeding through time and change, being regenerated at infinite velocity. Our awareness of this regeneration, which is truly good, requires that we stop passing judgments, and start seeing how even the smallest increments of time contain enough change to rejuvenate, or forgive, the entire universe, constantly. Why hold a grudge when it's guaranteed we are always doing the unprecedented? But for those who cannot live by the creative spirit of new life, we have the inhibiting presence of judges, laws, prisons, etc. Old, stale problems usually get old stale "remedies." But:

> "If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold all things are new." (*II Corinthians 5:17.*)

The calendar shows that each day is special. Today is February 19, 1988, the only such date on the calendar. Once it's gone it's gone forever. Likewise with each and every moment in this day. Look now at this essay, or book. You will never read it the same way twice. You cannot even see each word the same way twice. You will always have new ways of contemplating what you read, each time you read it. Look now at the calendar. It's not the same calendar you saw a moment ago. It changed because you changed.

Tom Dunham

We tend to seek new things in life, when in truth all things are automatically made new. It is in seeking security, feeling attached to old values, that we fail to discover the miracles of new life, new power, new joy, and new pleasure. We do all our suffering in boredom, that relentless wanting. We want change to redeem us, to save us from undesirable situations, yet we cause our own suffering by our failure to see that even old things are changing always into the new.

I no longer see "the same old faces," or encounter the "same old routine." My security now is my knowledge that all things are made new. I am closest to the creative presence of God when I let the past truly fall away, and allow myself to live for the moments as they unfold through the changes of my mind, body, and the world around me. All movement is creative change, and all change is constant, never-ending, yet the infinite power of God makes it possible for every thing, every motion, every point in time or space, to be unique, unprecedented miracles. To me there are miracles unlimited in the regeneration of this universe. We must be refreshed completely, always, in order to defy the void of death. Such refreshment is strongest, most enjoyable, more possible for those who can let go of the old and let God bring on the new.

Grace

Len Hedges-Goettl

What is the grace of God?
The slap across the child's face?
The leather strap that marks his bare thigh?
The insults hurled like sadistic blows?
What is the grace of God?

I knew what it was to hate life!
To breathe in the bitter wind of abuse,
To choke on the grit of unjust pain,
To exhale silence while hate dissolves my soul.
I knew what it was to hate life!

Why me?
Today: I heard again how evil they say I am.
Tonight: I prayed for courage to join the black of night.
Tomorrow: I wake, the coward who must face it all again.
Why me?

But . . .

Why not me?
Today: I was not one of many who choose death.
Tonight: I was no longer captive to the cycle of abuse.
Tomorrow: I do not face a day without hope.
Why not me?

I know the grace of God.
Trusting in what I do not understand, I lived another day.
Turning my feigned control over to the God, I found hope.

Len Hedges-Goettl and his wife Barbara are both preparing for the ministry at Princeton Theological Seminary. One of his professors there submitted to us his striking poem. Len wants you to know about Parents Anonymous, a self-help group for parents and children caught in the cycle of child abuse. Their number is in the yellow pages.

Taking responsibility for what is mine, I began becoming.
I know the grace of God.

I no longer fear the night.
To know grace is to hold a precious stone:
To break away blackness and to glimpse beauty;
To pry open my eyes to see the gem in my own dark life.
I no longer fear the night.

A new day came, life's storms raged, night fell,
I held the precious stone in my hand and fell asleep.

Tom Dunham

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As of July 1, Fellowship In Prayer President Paul Walsh added to his responsibilities the duties of Executive Secretary. We are happy to announce that you will be hearing from him on a regular basis in a new feature entitled "A Message From the President." Former Executive Secretary Kimberley Hollingsworth, who moved to the West Coast in June, said before leaving that she looks back at her time here with gratitude and looks to the future with happiness. Kim created more outreach programs than Fellowship In Prayer has ever had, and she will be missed.

Fellowship In Prayer Trustee James T.C. Liu retired from his post at Princeton University in June. A professor of East Asian Studies and of history, he said recently "We can understand a great deal about 20th century China by studying the formation of its traditional culture from the 11th century on."

Liu came to Princeton in 1965 from a position as associate professor of history at Stanford, where he was chairman of the East Asian Studies Committee.

He studied at Tsinghua University, Peking, and received his A.B. in 1941 from Yenching University. After coming to the United States in 1948 and becoming a U.S. citizen, he received his 1950 Ph.D. in history from the University of Pittsburgh, which awarded him its Distinguished Graduate Award (equivalent to an honorary degree) in 1984.

Liu began his teaching career as an instructor at Yenching University in 1945. He served as historical assistant for the International Military Tribunal in Tokyo in early 1946, then went to the University of Washington, Seattle, as a research assistant. A history instructor at Yale in 1950-51, he was appointed assistant professor at the University of Pittsburgh in 1951. Later promoted to associate professor, he developed Pittsburgh's East Asian program. He moved to Stanford in 1960.

At Princeton Liu has taught Chinese Culture and Chinese Institutional History and has cotaught Comparative Revolutions. Of these, "I enjoyed most the Chinese Culture, because we use a comparative approach and discuss American culture as well."

An active member of the Association for Asian Studies, he has served as editor of the *Journal of Asian Studies, World Politics, Tsinghua Journal of Chinese Studies* and *Sung Studies Newsletter*.

A former Fulbright research scholar in Taiwan and visiting fellow at the University of Kyoto, he has held fellowships from organizations such as the Rockefeller Foundation, the Fund for the Advancement of Education, the Social Science Research Council and the National Endowment for the Humanities. Instrumental in organizing international East Asian studies conferences (including a 1984 gathering in Hong Kong), he frequently arranges "ways for Princeton colleagues to visit China in various capacities, mostly through the Center of International Studies."

Liu has published numerous articles in Chinese and in English (some of which have appeared in German journals) and edited and coauthored several books, including *Reform in Sung China, Change in Sung China, Traditional China* and (in Chinese) *Ou-yang Hsiu*, as well as *A Thematic Collection of Research Articles on Sung China*. Forthcoming is "China Turning Inward."

After retirement, Liu intends to "help with editing the multivolume *Cambridge History of China*. I will continue my research and writing in an informal way and travel in both Europe and Asia." Happily, he will also continue as a Board member for Fellowship In Prayer.

Emily Sargent Councilman, whose resignation from our Board was announced earlier, wrote as follows in her resignation letter to Paul Walsh.

> In the past few years—I am now 79—my economic and physical-health limitations have led me (through spiritual awareness, I believe) to my need for a change in the way of my involvement now with others in the deep concerns of my life. It is a change from the official and public to a "just being present" with every individual who touches my life personally; and to an active trust in the God within me—within *all* of us—to let me be a channel of Love to the ever-widening circle of others, seen and unseen, known and unknown, in need of grace.
>
> I have come to realize that my contribution to the Fellowship In Prayer should now be served by continuing to be "present" in prayer, love, and affirmation for each one involved in this ministry—trustees, officers, staff and all those others whose lives have been, or can be, touched through this Fellowship.

Receiving Strength Through Prayer

JOHN MARKS TEMPLETON

When asked the secret of his success John Templeton gives prayer the top priority. Giving thanks to God, he feels, provides believers with strength that can raise them to new heights of performance and insight.

Templeton's approach to prayer relates to this concept of God and God's creative process. God is infinite. Everything that exists in the universe and beyond the universe is God. That means that the visible universe is only a small particle of God and is itself a manifestation of God. By the word "manifest," Templeton means that which a human being can know. Thus one little particle of God has become known to us through gravity, light waves, pulsars, and other things that enable us to perceive a few features of the universe.

Templeton believes that we ourselves are one of God's more recent creations, and, again, we represent only the tiniest fraction of God. If we realize this truth and try to bring ourselves into oneness with God, if we become humble tools in God's hands and clear channels for God's purposes, we will be able to accomplish much more than if we fail to realize that oneness. And what we do accomplish will be more likely to endure. No matter what you do in life—enrolling in college, getting married, buying stock, doing a tax return, extracting a tooth—you will do it better if you start with prayer. And God will use you as a conduit for his love and wisdom. Your prayer should say that the words you speak and the actions you take will be in harmony with God's purposes, for the benefit of God's children, and never meant only for selfish goals.

If this is your prayer, everything that follows is bound to be more successful and your life will radiate joy. With a mind no longer in conflict, you are far less likely to disagree with your associates or do something you'll later regret, on cool reflection. So your decision making will

From The Templeton Plan: 21 Steps to Personal Success and Real Happiness, *as described by John Marks Templeton to James Ellison.* *Copyright (c) 1987 by Kindness, N. V. Reprinted by Harper and Row, Publishers, Inc.*

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be improved if you try to bring yourself into contact with God and into a oneness with God's purposes. By making a profound effort to be one with God and God's children through prayer, everything you do in life will turn out far better, including your business decisions. Success will seek you out.

Templeton's personal technique for getting into harmony with God—whether he is concerned with his children or his business or his many charities—is to pray simply, "Thy will be done." This approach helps him to empty his mind of all preconceptions so that he can give himself over more completely to what he perceives as God's guidance.

He prays often during the day. And if there is an especially complex problem to solve, or decision to make, he'll try to wait a day and spend extra time in prayer before he acts.

Before going to sleep that night, he says, "God, I have done the best I can. Now guide me in this decision." Very often the next morning he has a solution that is better than anything he had considered the day before. Putting yourself in God's hands through prayer and then working as hard and honestly as you can is the mark of a successful person.

Templeton also encourages his associates to participate in prayer, even when they are somewhat reluctant to get involved. In public meetings,

Tom Dunham

he has found that it is more effective to give people very little advance warning; sometimes, an hour before a meeting is to start, he'll say casually to an associate, "I'm going to ask you to open with a prayer." That gives the person a little time to prepare, though not so much that he or she becomes overly nervous or self-conscious.

Templeton feels that it is a good policy to rotate prayer at regular meetings among a number of people, because then the practice is less likely to harden into a ritual. The person praying benefits, and those listening benefit as their friends pray. The ceremony takes on a family, intimate quality, and Templeton's principle of success through prayer is spread among many.

A marked emphasis on prayer was not a part of Templeton's early investment years. His career as an investment counselor can be divided into two equal parts. For the first twenty years ("when I was a worse back slider than at any other time in my life," he says), there was no prayer at investment meetings. But, for the past twenty years, all meetings have opened and closed with prayer. And it's a fact that his stress on prayer has coincided with the most successful performance period of the Templeton Growth Fund.

Skeptics may downgrade the importance of prayer in Templeton's investment selections. They may say that he was successful even before he began to pray regularly or inject prayer so openly into his business sessions. And they may further argue that he would have reached the same high level of success as an investor even if he had neglected prayer altogether.

Templeton disagrees. Prayer has given him, he's convinced, a clarity of mind and depth of insight that have been key factors in his success. Through the power of prayer, he sees much more deeply into himself and into others. He is certain that without prayer he would never have become the outstanding success that he is.

He says: "Everyone who hopes to be a successful person should start each day with a prayer. Like Solomon, do not offer self-centered prayers, but pray for wisdom and understanding. Try to end each prayer with the words, 'Thy will be done, O Lord, not mine.' The Lord's purposes are much wiser than our purposes.

"Pray that you are overwhelmingly grateful for your blessings. If you are healthy, thank the Lord for that. If your children are healthy, thank the Lord for that. Thank him for the things you have instead of asking for what you don't have.

"Begin each day by thinking of five blessings, or ten blessings. If you make a practice of doing that, your whole day will go more usefully, and constructively.

"You will be far along the road to success."

One of Templeton's favorite prayers is from Romans (12:9-18). He feels that there exists nowhere in the Bible a better prescription for success and happiness: "Let love be genuine; hate what is evil, hold fast to what is good; love one another with brotherly affection; outdo one another in showing honor. Never flag in zeal, be aglow with the Spirit, serve the Lord. Rejoice in your hope, be patient in tribulation, be constant in prayer. Contribute to the needs of the saints, practice hospitality.

"Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse them. Rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep. Live in harmony with one another; do not be haughty, but associate with the lowly; never be conceited. Repay no one evil for evil, but take thought for what is noble in the sight of all. If possible, so far as it depends upon you, live peaceably with all."

Step 17 teaches us that God is infinite and that just as the visible universe is only a small particle of God, we are only an infinitesimal part of the visible universe. No matter what we accomplish, we have done it under God. If we are humble, if we can bring ourselves to realize that we are one of God's more recent creations, perhaps not even his most important one, we stand a better chance to be balanced people who will lead happy and successful lives.

Try these exercises to enhance strength of your prayer: (1) Pray frequently, (2) Pray that God will use you as a channel for his love and wisdom, (3) Pray that you will be in harmony with God's purposes, (4) Pray that what you say and do will be for the benefit of everyone, (5) Put yourself in God's hands, (6) Be overwhelmingly grateful for all your blessings, (7) Pray simply, "Thy will be done."

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The purpose of Fellowship in Prayer is to promote the practice of prayer among all religious faiths whose fundamental belief is in God regardless of race, creed, or color, and whose tenets include the universal attributes of truth, honesty, justice and mercy, that thereby there may arise a closer relation to Almighty God and a deeper spirit of fellowship among humanity.

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We welcome articles on prayer, meditation, spiritual experience, religious faith or practices, and similar topics. Preference is given to experiential manuscripts. Manuscripts should not exceed 1500 words, should be typed, double spaced, and sent to The Editor, Fellowship In Prayer, 291 Witherspoon Street, Princeton, NJ 08542. Please include a biography of no more than five lines.

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